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October 12, 2012

WASHINGTON – Congressman Charles F. Bass (NH-02) joined 90 of his Republican and Democratic colleagues this week in sending a letter to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) requesting the Department immediately release as much Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding as possible under the current continuing resolution.

Bass said:

"With the arrival of colder mornings and evenings, many Granite Staters have already turned on their heat. Unfortunately, there are many New Hampshire families struggling to pay their bills, and the high cost of home heating needs is an added burden. LIHEAP is an important and necessary program that helps thousands of families in our state meet their heating needs. Immediately releasing LIHEAP funds now, at the start of what will likely be another long winter, will help states better plan their needs and start helping those who need help now."

Bass has long been a supporter of this vital program. Two weeks ago, he signed on as a cosponsor of bipartisan legislation (H.R. 6533) to ensure New Hampshire and other cold-weather states do not receive a reduction in LIHEAP funding. Earlier this year, he helped to lead a bipartisan coalition of more than 115 House members to urge the House Appropriations Committee to fund LIHEAP at its authorized level of \$5.1 billion in the Fiscal Year 2013 appropriations process. Last year, he offered a fully-offset amendment to the 2011 Continuing Resolution to restore funding for LIHEAP's emergency contingency fund, which had been zeroed out.

The [letter to Secretary Sebelius](#) is below:

October 10, 2012

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a vital safety net for many low-income families, especially for our elderly, our disabled, and our veterans. As state agencies prepare their LIHEAP programs for the coming winter, it is imperative that the Department of Health and Human Services immediately release as much LIHEAP funding as possible under the current continuing resolution (CR).

As you know, spending patterns for LIHEAP assistance are not consistent throughout the fiscal year. Instead, the majority of assistance in many states is distributed during the winter months to offset high home heating costs. Many state governors have also projected that delays in LIHEAP funding would result in families across the country having unmet heating needs this winter. As you are also aware, low-income families spend a higher percentage of their income on energy costs. This is especially true during times of extreme temperatures and increased

energy prices. October marks the beginning of the coldest months for many families, and with continued elevated levels of unemployment across our states, this year's heating season will be an even greater struggle. The timing is crucial for the release of the majority of LIHEAP funding.

Accordingly, we believe it is critical that the states begin the process of assisting those individuals with the greatest needs immediately. We request that you release as much LIHEAP funding as possible under the current CR without delay, in order to allow states and low-income households the resources they need to prepare for a challenging winter. With forecasts for above-normal snowfall for all major I-95 cities, including New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, the timing is critical.

Thank you for your continued support of the LIHEAP program and for your consideration of this request.

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